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Editorial

Under the Macapagal-Arroyo regime

Prepare for bigger battles, achieve greater victories!



One hundred days after assuming office, the Macapagal-Arroyo regime has not achieved much to sufficiently address the prevailing exploitative and oppressive system and resolve the fundamental problems of the people.

The Macapagal-Arroyo regime has not shown much prospect at lifting the economy it has inherited, from the morass of a crisis worse than ever before. There is no sign that the ruling regime will depart from its adherence to the imperialist policy of “globalization” and liberalization, deregulation, denationalization and privatization, that has ruined the livelihood and further weighed down on the shoulders of the toiling masses in the country. The economic

crisis is bound to worsen even more in the face of the slowdown and recessionary trend of the world capitalist system.

There has been no change from the oppressive and counter-revolutionary stance of the reactionary armed forces against the revolutionary forces and masses, even as the regime enters into peace talks with the NDFP and the MILF. Heavy pressure and influence from the militarists continue to bear heavily upon the regime.

The Estrada camp, which is destabilizing the Macapagal-Arroyo regime through bribes and their twisted version of people’s uprising at EDSA, is showing-off force. They pretentiously refer to it as “EDSA 3”. The newly seated regime will enjoy no stability and factionalism among

reactionaries will further intensify and reach even higher levels.

The Party and the revolutionary movement have grown more vigorously than ever as a result of the accumulation of victories in the expansion and strengthening of the revolutionary and progressive forces in the entire process of the comprehensive and unprecedented advance of our revolutionary tasks. Our positioning in the victorious protest movement and uprising, and leadership over a significant part of this, also served as a most important factor.

More than ever, the national democratic revolution is now in an advantageous position to face bigger battles and win greater victories.

We reiterate our earlier-stated tasks in the present situation:

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1 Carry forward and all the more expand and deepen the rousing, organizing and mobilizing of the various sectors of the people. Reap and consolidate the gains in the struggle to overthrow the Estrada regime and boldly expand our reach, influence, organizing and mobilizing of the people, especially among the basic masses and the democratic sectors. Recruit into the Party the most advanced and most determined in revolution.

2 Press for the prosecution and punishment of Estrada and his cohorts. Make this struggle serve to sustain the militancy of the broad masses of those aroused and mobilized in the protest movement and uprising, maintain their vigilance over the new government and expand the breadth of demands for reforms. Continue to oppose the diehard reactionaries both among the Estrada camp and those back in power. Relatedly, press for the long-delayed prosecution and punishment of the Marcoses.

3 Advance the struggle for the basic and immediate interests of the people, especially the basic masses. Fight for the realization of genuine and comprehensive social changes in accordance with the line and program of the peoples' democratic revolution. Bring into focus, elaborate on and press for these mainly by means of militant mass struggles, and also by means of the electoral struggle, other parliamentary struggles and peace talks.

Press for the implementation of the Comprehensive Agreement on Human Rights and International Humanitarian Law (CARHRIHL). Demand recrimination for the fascist crimes of the GRP and its armed forces and the immediate release of all political prisoners, and fight US intervention in this regard. Likewise, struggle for the national and democratic contents of the NDFP proposals for the Comprehensive Agreement on Socio-Economic Reforms (CASER).

Resolutely struggle for basic changes to eradicate the roots of the basic problems of society. Fight the maneuvers and dirty tactics of the GRP in the talks. Maintain vigilance against, expose and oppose the schemes of the militarists, who have a run of the Macapagal-Arroyo regime.

4 Continue to expand and strengthen the united front. Strive to maintain and nurture to the best of our ability, and further broaden the linkages that have been formed in the protest movement and uprising. Pursue and maximize various types of formal and informal relations, exchanges and consultations, open and clandestine cooperation and coordination ►

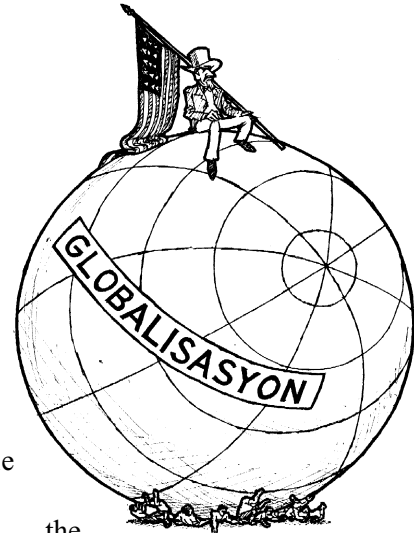
The national economy continues to decline

The national economy continues to be in the depths of crisis under the Macapagal-Arroyo regime. Even the limited relief brought about by EDSA 2 could not conceal the intensifying economic crisis and its cruel impact on the Filipino people. This belies the reactionary propaganda that our “economic fundamentals” are sound, and the Macapagal-Arroyo regime’s propaganda that the cause of the economy’s continuing downturn is the “loss of confidence” of foreign investors due to anomalies committed by the past regime.

The country’s economy has long been mired in crisis. It has not been able to recover from the blow of the 1997 financial crisis. Faithful implementation of the neoliberal policies of liberalization, deregulation, denationalization and privatization by past

regimes has wrought unprecedented destruction on the national economy and poverty and deprivation on the Filipino people.

Despite this, the Macapagal-Arroyo regime has not outlined a new economic program. Macapagal-Arroyo has already declared that she would continue Estrada’s “pro-poor” economic program. At a time when the peoples of the world are vehemently condemning neoliberal policies, the new regime is staunchly standing by “globalization” and “free trade” in accordance with US imperialism’s dictates. This stance is no different from Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo’s staunch advancement and ►



◀ with the broadest possible range. Strengthen relations with our closest and most reliable allies.

Take advantage of the current electoral campaign to carry out the fundamental task of exposing the rottenness of the entire ruling system, state, parliament as well as the reactionary elections, and to propagate the revolutionary alternative; and to expand alliances and contacts, position progressives in the government, and gain certain tactical advantages.

5 Boldly expand and strengthen the guerrilla fronts, further invigorate the antifeudal mass movement and advance the armed struggle.

The revolutionary mass base can consolidate and deepen only by vigorously advancing antifeudal struggles in the vast countryside.

Develop expertise in combining legal, semilegal and illegal means to boldly expand and advance peasant struggles and other mass movements in the countryside.

Assiduously lay down and strengthen the political, organizational, military, cultural and economic requisites for the solid advance of the armed struggle to a higher level.

In the new situation, launching tactical offensives remains a task of the NPA. We must pay greater attention to explaining to the public the just bases and objectives of each tactical offensive and punishment, especially in regard to big and well-known targets.

6 Further expand and strengthen revolutionary and progressive propaganda.

Pay greater attention and provide more people and resources to expand, strengthen and comprehensively develop both clandestine and open propaganda work. Promptly clarify for the benefit of the revolutionary forces and the people the viewpoint of the Party and revolutionary movement in regard to the day’s burning issues and people’s struggles. Actively counter enemy propaganda. Systematize and develop use of the established mass media for revolutionary and progressive propaganda. Utilize and develop popular, new and creative means such as video presentations, comics, cultural presentations and others. Along with this, seriously develop the scope of our propaganda and the use of modern means of communication such as newspapers, radio, television, telephone, the internet and others. **AB**

UNDER THE MACAPAGAL-ARROYO REGIME

advocation of legislation favoring such policies before she became president.

Macapagal-Arroyo had just assumed the presidency when the International Monetary Fund and World Bank issued an “assessment” and a number of “recommendations” to the new regime. The two institutions ordered the immediate regulation of the huge national deficit through new taxes, further liberalization of the public sector, especially the energy and health sectors, and the liberalization of the banking sector.



The Macapagal-Arroyo regime is scrambling to implement these dictates in exchange for a \$300-million loan from the World Bank. It has already announced a policy of austerity to trim down the budget deficit. It is also fasttracking the long-delayed privatization of the Philippine National Bank and the National Power Corporation.

GENERAL INDICATORS OF CRISIS

The country's gross national product and gross domestic product are estimated to grow only by a maximum of 3% in 2001. This is the lowest growth target in the entire Southeast Asian region. The target was forcibly lowered from 4.5%-5.5% due to the slowdown of the US economy, the further decline of Japan's economy and the expected downturn in the export of electronic components.

Electronic exports are the country's main re-export and their biggest market is the US. This 2001, total imports to the US from the Philippines fell by 13.6%, resulting in a 7.5% decrease in the country's electronic components exports.

The balance of payments deficit already amounts to \$267 million (P13.35 trillion). This means that last year, capital outflow through trade, remittances, bank transactions, direct and portfolio investments exceeded capital inflow. Pro-imperialist agencies continue to warn against investing in the Philippines. In the first quarter of 2001, up to \$466.7 million in portfolio investments left the country compared to the \$464.7 million that came in (resulting in a \$1.7-million deficit). The amount that flowed in is a mere one-third of the \$339.4 million that entered the country in the first quarter of 2000.

Indicating the worsening economic slowdown is the decline of Philippine foreign trade. In the first quarter of 2001, foreign trade dropped 7.2% compared to last year. There has been a trade surplus but only because

import values declined more (11.7%) than export values (3.3%). This is the first time that both import and export values decreased. This indicates the drying up of old inventories which pushed up export values in past years despite the continued decline of imports since 1998.

Since the decline in the country's imports, many industries dependent on imported materials have carried out widespread retrenchment of workers to deflect high costs of production. Others eventually closed shop. In the face of the persistent fall of this year's foreign trade, more workers are sure to be retrenched and more factories shut down.

At the same time, the country's local production and net sales fell by 2.4%. The biggest decline was in the production of food, electrical machinery and garments. Production costs rose by 7.8% and sales costs by 10.4%.

In February 2001, the inflation rate went up to 6.7% from 3.9% within a year. Among those which registered the biggest price increases are LPG, kerosene, electricity and water bills. Prices of medicine and health services also continued to rise. A peso in 1994 is now worth a mere 63 centavos.

The peso-dollar exchange rate remains unstable. The peso's value hovers at around P50 compared to the dollar despite efforts by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas to curb currency speculation and attract new capital through relatively lower interest rates.

The reactionary government is bankrupt. The country's foreign debt has gone up to \$52 billion (P2.6 trillion) and the national budget deficit is expected to reach P200 billion this year.

IMPACT ON THE PEOPLE

The Macapagal-Arroyo regime has admitted that unemployment rates rose to 11.4% from 9.4% last year (affecting 24% of the entire labor force). In reality, 50% of the entire labor force are either out of work or underemployed. This is due to widespread layoffs, the absence of new jobs and labor flexibilization.

Liberalization has exacerbated poverty in the countryside. The dislocation of farmers continues due to rampant land-use conversion and dumping of cheap agricultural products from other countries. Prices of local agricultural products are falling due to the overimportation of cheap agricultural products. This, even as farmers' expenses for imported pesticides and seeds are rising. Recently, already low prices of local palay fell further due to the overimportation of rice (more ►

◀ than 500,000 metric tons). The Macapagal-Arroyo regime approved the importation despite sufficient local production to fulfill the minimum access volume mandated by the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. Also, due to importation, there is an oversupply of garlic, chicken and other food items.

Contrary to Macapagal-Arroyo's promise, layoffs in the public sector continue due to the privatization of public corporations and institutions. More than 300 companies are likewise set to retrench 100,000 workers in the second quarter of the year because of rising costs of production and declining sales. Most affected are workers in the electronics sector. Private companies in public utilities have likewise threatened to lay off workers if the Macapagal-Arroyo regime does not grant their demand for an increase in the price of their services.

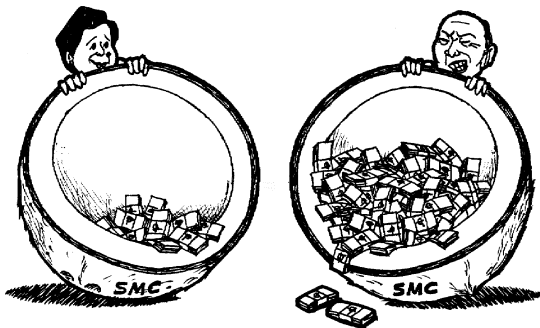
The minimum wage is still pegged at P250, even as more than P418 (P501 in Metro Manila) a day is needed for a family of six to live decently. Up to now, demands for a P125-increase in workers' wages and a P2,500-hike in government employees' salaries remain unheeded. The Macapagal-Arroyo is even planning to cut already low wages and salaries by increasing obligatory contributions

to the SSS and GSIS by up to 12%.

SO LONG AS THE MACAPAGAL-ARROYO REGIME REMAINS subservient to the dictates of its imperialist masters in implementing the policy of liberalization, deregulation and privatization, the economic crisis is sure to worsen. To give foreign capitalists and the ruling class some breathing space, the regime is surely going to pass on the burden of crisis to the people.

Thus, the waging of economic struggles to alleviate the poverty and deprivation the masses of the people and defend their livelihood and rights has become more urgent. There is need to intensify the struggle against widespread layoffs, contractualization and casualization that attack workers' jobs and rights. There is likewise a need to strengthen the struggle against privatization in the public sector. The demand for an increase in workers' wages and government employees' salaries is more justified than ever.

In the countryside, there is need to continue strengthening the struggle against widespread land-use conversion and liberalization in agriculture. Moreover, there is need to continue to struggle for genuine land reform to enable farmers to improve their livelihood. **AB**



Conflict and compromise within the ruling class

Consequent to the persistent demand of various democratic sectors, the Macapagal-Arroyo regime has thrown Joseph Estrada in jail. Estrada is now set to face a plunder case before the Sandiganbayan. Nonetheless, he still has tremendous resources at hand to undertake legal and political maneuvers to escape punishment.

It is only the people's militant actions that can ensure that he and

his leading co-conspirators remain in prison, would be prosecuted, put on trial and punished. We must be vigilant and resist any move to "settle" the case and allow the guilty parties to go unpunished.

PLUNDER AND GRAFT CASES WERE FILED at the Sandiganbayan after militant organizations demanded that the Supreme Court affirm Estrada's ouster to bar him from invoking legal provisions granting presidents immunity from suit. Before this, Estrada and his minions were able to move around scot-free and

campaign for the elections. They still control tremendous resources and retain a level of influence over the reactionary bureaucracy, especially local administrative units, enabling them to wage a strong campaign, finance rallies, commit electoral fraud and position themselves in power.

Behind all the brouhaha over the processing of Estrada's cases, however, his biggest cronies, co-conspirators and patrons are quietly being exempted from punishment one-by-one, in ►

exchange for economic and political concessions for the regime.

LUCIO TAN, ONE OF ESTRADA'S erstwhile leading cronies, has been granted a reprieve in the payment of billions of pesos in loans from the Philippine National Bank (PNB) to prepare for the latter's impending privatization and to convince Tan to sell his PNB shares so that the bank could be sold to a foreign bank that has expressed interest in acquiring it.

At first, the government went through the motions of going after Tan's P25.27-billion unpaid taxes and filed an appeal to reopen a tax-evasion case against him that had already been dismissed by the courts. But the regime suddenly backtracked and declared that it was ready to grant amnesty to big tax evaders (like the Marcoses) provided they enter into a compromise and settle part of their tax obligations.

Another major factor in Macapagal-Arroyo's benign attitude towards Tan is the support for the 2004 elections that her clique is set to receive from him and other Filipino-Chinese businessmen. Macapagal-Arroyo's main broker in cornering deals with Filipino-Chinese businessmen is her husband Mike Arroyo.

Estrada's patron Eduardo "Danding" Cojuangco Jr. is also currently in the thick of negotiations with the Macapagal-Arroyo clique. In fact, Cojuangco's Nationalist People's Coalition (NPC) party has already declared its support for the new government.

It will be recalled that the newly installed Estrada immediately restored Cojuangco to the leadership of San Miguel Corporation (SMC) in 1998. There is now a running

battle (within and outside the courts) between Cojuangco and the new government for control of SMC, the biggest corporation in the hands of Danding.

The Macapagal-Arroyo clique would like to remove Estrada-appointed representatives (including his brother-in-law and close friends) from the board of directors, replace them with its own people and install a new chairman. Among those Macapagal-Arroyo would like to seat are former Presidential Security Group chief Gen. Leo Alvez and Renato Valencia, former Social Security System president under the Ramos regime and potentially the new SMC chairman.

Open tactics to seize the chairmanship from Cojuangco include the government's pursuit of a case to settle ownership of the coconut levy funds (comprising 95% of the shares of United Coconut Planters Bank or UCPB) which were appropriated by Cojuangco to purchase 27% of SMC shares. As soon as the Supreme Court decides that the coconut levy

funds are publicly owned, the regime shall gain control of practically the entire UCPB and the 27% SMC shares. This, along with SMC shares held by other government agencies like the Social Security System, Government Service Insurance System and the AFP Retirement and Separation Benefits System would be enough to oust Cojuangco and vote in Valencia.

But Cojuangco is not an opponent to be trifled with. He boasts of having the sympathy of many private SMC shareholders. He continues to have significant blocs within the police,

military and civilian bureaucracy in his pocket. Destabilization threats from his end remain. SMC, however, is too big a milking cow for the Macapagal-Arroyo clique to leave in Cojuangco's hands.

With the Macapagal-Arroyo government coming to power at a time of unprecedented crisis, there are very few resources that the various factions of the ruling class could peacefully divide among themselves. The new ruling clique will fight tooth and nail to gain possession of the more lucrative spoils of power.

Thus it is acting swiftly to neutralize Cojuangco's biggest henchman Gen. Panfilo Lacson. Macapagal-Arroyo abolished the Presidential Anti-Organized Crime Task Force (PAOCTF) and has threatened to divulge the crimes that the agency perpetrated under the Estrada regime. The government has also been consistently baring evidence that would link Lacson to the November 2000 abduction and brutal killing of public relations practitioner Salvador Dacer and his driver. The presentation of cases against Lacson is reaching a crescendo as the elections near in an effort to prevent him from positioning himself once more.

Behind all this, the government is cooking up a deal that would grant Cojuangco 20% ownership of the disputed UCPB and SMC shares in exchange for the regime's cornering of the remaining 80%. Cojuangco is as yet adamantly against such an arrangement.

Meanwhile, as pressure continues to bear on Cojuangco with respect to SMC, Macapagal-Arroyo has agreed to a number of minor concessions offered by Cojuangco such as the



merger of the ruling Lakas-NUCD with NPC. Danding's son Marcos Cojuangco is currently running for congress in Pangasinan under the Lakas-NPC banner. The existence of an alliance between Lakas and the United Negros Alliance (or UNA, Danding's party in Negros) has also been bared as news broke out that Ignacio Arroyo, Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo's brother-in-law and Lakas-NUCD head for Western Visayas, has been shelling out funds to both Lakas and UNA candidates.

There has also been a level of

compromise between the Macapagal-Arroyo regime and the hated Marcoses. Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. is running for reelection as governor of Ilocos Norte under the Lakas-Kilusang Bagong Lipunan banner.

Meanwhile, Gen. Angelo Reyes, former AFP chief under the Estrada regime, was retained in his post by Macapagal-Arroyo and later appointed defense secretary.

Former deputy chief of staff, AFP intelligence chief and head of the Presidential Security Command,

Gen. Jose Calimlim has, on the other hand been reinstated as chief of Task Force Aduana, renewing his opportunities for striking it rich through smuggling.

The face of cronyism under the Macapagal-Arroyo regime is slowly emerging.

Contradictions and the struggle for concessions and accommodation will continue and even intensify among the various factions of the ruling class, especially since the new ruling clique is still in the process of consolidating. **AB**

Estrada's arrest is warmly welcomed by the people

Statement by Gregorio "Ka Roger" Rosal
National Spokesperson
Communist Party of the Philippines
April 26, 2001



The arrest and detention of Estrada is warmly welcomed by the revolutionary movement and Filipino people.

This is a victory of the broad democratic mass movement which did not end with the mere ouster of the Estrada regime. It has persisted in calling for the arrest, prosecution, trial and punishment of Estrada and his principal cohorts. This victory was attained despite the attempts by certain camps in the Macapagal-Arroyo regime to accommodate Estrada.

Estrada is now using all legal tactics to gain special privileges and concessions. We must frustrate all these, keep Estrada in jail and deny him the freedom to carry-out his covert maneuvers. The people's militant actions will not stop until full justice is achieved for all victims of his regime.

There is need to expose the deception of the leaders of Estrada-funded groups. They employ the "poor vs. rich" demagoguery in order to foment trouble in the streets. Win over the people who are victims of this deception. It is important to

expose Estrada's crimes against the toiling people, especially his self-enrichment and implementation of pro-imperialist, anti-worker and anti-peasant economic policies.

The people also need to continue the militant struggle to have Estrada's principal cohorts, who are currently being accommodated under the Macapagal-Arroyo regime, punished for plunder and other crimes. The struggle for the arrest, prosecution and punishment of the Marcoses should also be given attention once again.

In relation to this, the people will closely watch and guard the process of prosecuting and trying Estrada and his cohorts until they are punished. The people will oppose and condemn all compromises and accommodations granted these criminals that will allow them to go scot-free and defile the people's call for justice.

If justice could not be carried out by the Macapagal-Arroyo regime, it will be achieved under the people's democratic government. **AB**

THE FASCIST STATE CONTINUES ON A RAMPAGE

Despite its peace rhetoric, gross human rights violations continue under the Macapagal-Arroyo regime. Counterrevolutionary war continues to wreak havoc upon the orders of militarists within the regime.

Destructive counterrevolutionary military operations persist in the countryside. The number of peasant families victimized and further made to suffer continues to grow. The brutal suppression of workers' rights goes on unabated.

Following are some of the documented human rights violations committed within the first hundred days of the Macapagal-Arroyo regime, making it no different from past regimes:

April. Forced evacuation of hundreds of families in Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-tawi as around 3,000 AFP troops wage all-out war against Abu Sayyaf bandits. Human rights violations against the people in these areas have continued without letup since the ousted Estrada regime declared war against the Moro people in September 2000. The situation made a turn for the worse with the violence brought about by the Macapagal-Arroyo regime's declaration this April of all-out war against the Abu Sayyaf.

February 23. Shooting that wounded or killed more than 60 innocent civilians in Talipao, Sulu; burning of around 15 houses in the area, destruction or looting of the residents' property; cutting of coconut trees and destruction of the people's other sources of livelihood.

In Patikul, Sulu, 30-minute strafing by two platoons of Scout Rangers of 10 houses, wounding three civilians; abduction and interrogation of Sabir Omal Habibulla, a suspected Abu Sayyaf supporter. He was forced to declare that the innocent civilians wounded were all Abu Sayyaf members.

January 23: Relentless strafing by the 77th IB against the residents of Barangay Tayagan, Parang, Sulu, while in pursuit of Abu Sayyaf bandits. This resulted in the death of two civilians and the wounding of a deaf-mute child.

April 18: Illegal arrest by the AFP of nine innocent farmers in Mt. Tag-ao, Sitio Agcawan, Barangay

Bungsu-an, Dumarao, Capiz; branding them Red fighters and slapping trumped-up charges against them. The following day, the NPA's Norlito Aguirre Command of Capiz belied allegations that the peasants were NPA members.

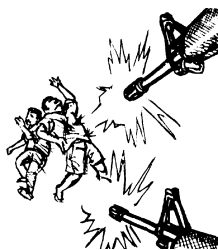
April 15. Killing of Ramon "Bong" Ternida, 20, chairperson of Anakbayan and Bayan Muna coordinator in Mindoro Oriental, by a policeman. Ternida was stabbed to death nine days after he helped coordinate the release of prisoner of war Maj. Noel Buan.

March 31-April 2. Forcing all male residents of Km 28, Aliwagwag, Cateel, Davao Oriental out of their homes and torturing them. The perpetrators were 30th Special Forces and 60th IB troops (responsible for the 1999 Mawab massacre) who were out to blindly avenge the death of one of their fellow soldiers in an NPA ambush. The men were made to stay under the heat of the sun, kicked, punched and hit by wooden clubs that were two inches across in an attempt to force them to admit that they were NPA members. After this, Mt. Tambayog in Spur 2, a village adjacent to Km 28, was bombed at dawn of April 1. More than 17 families were prohibited from leaving their homes, even just to buy food, till the afternoon of April 2.

March 9. Abduction of Christopher Chielo Suelo, a leader of the Pagkakaisa't Ugnayan ng Magbubukid sa Laguna (Pumalag), by military agents at around 12:30 in the afternoon near the National Irrigation Administration office in Barangay Sta. Clara Sur, Pila, Laguna. The military maliciously tagged Pumalag as a front organization of the NPA.

March 5 and 9. Demolition of the houses of more than 50 families along Old Samson Road by Task Force COPRISS (Control Prevention and Removal of Illegal Structures and Squatting) of the Quezon City government and the PNP. With the demolition team offering no temporary shelters, the families had nowhere to go. Four children (Roselyn Maragot, 10, Roselle Marabot, 5, Rosalinda Marabot, 2, and Jessice Catindoy, 14 months) who had no place to sleep aside from a wooden cart, died of measles.

Marso 8. Abduction at around 3 p.m. and three-day illegal detention by four civilian-clad policemen of Vilma dela Cruz and Rod Viray, Bagong Alyansang Makabayan (Bayan) leaders in Bataan. Supt. Arnold Gunacao, ►





Central Cordillera Agricultural Program Exploitation under the guise of “development aid”

The Central Cordillera Agricultural Program or CECAP is a deceptive and exploitative “development program” from the European Union. This programme further fetters the people of Cordillera to poverty contrary to its declared goal of improving their lot.

CECAP is part of the European Union’s (EU) grand design to promote its economic and political interest in the country. The Macapagal-Arroyo regime has yet to take action to stop the operation

of such anti-people programs. The program is under the joint supervision of the Delegation of the EU in the country and the Department of Agriculture.

CECAP was first implemented during the Aquino regime, continued under the Ramos and Estrada regimes and persists up to the present administration. Funds borrowed from the IMF-World Bank were used for the program with the Aquino regime spending P32 million and the Ramos regime, P148.5 million.

Like other imperialist programs in the country, CECAP is part

of the reactionary government’s counterrevolutionary program. It is being implemented as a psywar tool against the masses and to counter revolutionary propaganda. Such programs aim to douse with cold water the people’s burning desire to carry out radical economic change. CECAP’s scope of operation includes Abra, Ifugao, Kalinga and Mountain Province.

INTENSIFICATION OF SEMIFEUDAL EXPLOITATION

CECAP aims to promote and develop commercial agriculture in ►

◀ intelligence chief of the Bataan-PNP, claimed that they were arrested for illegal possession of firearms.

Bombardment by water cannons and truncheoning of more than 120 picketing workers of the Yoklahoma Tire Philippines, Inc. by Clark Development Corporation policemen. More than 30 workers were wounded during the violent dispersal. The workers picketed to protest the company’s management policies.

Also on March 8. Suspension of 19 UPLB student leaders and locking up of the office of the University Student Council. The suspension came after they led a struggle against the eviction of students from a dormitory.

March 6-8. Harassment and torture by the 30th Scout Rangers Company of residents of Sitio Oblan, Barangay San Marcelino, General Nakar, Quezon; interrogation of, and forcing two farmers to act as guides;

illegal search and looting of residents’ properties. This occurred before the bungled rescue operation that killed NPA prisoner of war P/CInsp. Abelardo martin.

Marso 1. Attack and illegal search by troops of the 24th IB and Pampanga-PNP of houses of suspected NPA supporters in Barangay Culabasa, Mexico, Pampanga. The fascists concealed their nameplates and badges.

February-March. Blocking by militarists, such as Gen. Renato de Villa, of the supposedly scheduled release of more than 200 political prisoners, including Leoncio Pitao and Lorna Baba. The regime has also brazenly refused to release Donato Continente and Juanito Itaas despite their having been granted parole several times. In fact, according to the GRP, it could not turn its back on a prior commitment to the US for the two detainees to remain incarcerated. They continue to be held in prison upon orders of US imperialism. **AB**

Cordillera communities. It further shackles Cordillera's traditional agriculture to a cash-based and unsustainable economy. CECAP intends to replace local plant varieties and turn the Cordillera into a dumping ground for fertilizers and pesticides produced by imperialist European companies.

Traditional rice varieties are being replaced with high-yielding varieties. Aside from this, large-scale conversion of farmlands to commercial vegetable and fruit farms is being carried out, reducing local rice production.

The Cordillera was also used to test new potato varieties from Ireland and Germany to spare Europe from possible harmful results. The tests that were carried out caused the spread of plant diseases and pests in Benguet, Ifugao and Mountain Province, resulting in the devastation of local farms and the bankruptcy of farmers.

CECAP is setting up a rural financial system, a network of farm production groups and a marketing network composed of local middlemen and selected cooperatives.

Cooperatives being established by CECAP in the barrios are subsumed under municipal and provincial mother cooperatives. Existing village cooperatives are encouraged to become part of CECAP mother cooperatives. As an incentive, CECAP extends credit to both existing cooperatives and those being established under its auspices. Cooperatives under CECAP are required to buy products only from CECAP mother cooperatives, at prices dictated by CECAP.

CECAP also organizes savings and loan groups (SLG) composed

of five to 10 members. It is with these SLGs integrated into CECAP cooperatives in the barrios where their members' contributions are deposited and where they could avail of credit. Cordillerans are lured into the SLGs by the availability of credit limits that are twice the amount of their deposits.



Members of these groups pay a compulsory P50 fee and a regular weekly deposit of P5-20. When a member avails of credit, 15% is automatically deducted to cover annual interest, a service fee and an emergency fund contribution. In actuality, borrowers pay an interest of 30% because half of the amount that they borrow comes from money that they had previously deposited. In addition, those who are unable to make amortization payments on time are slapped a fine of 2% monthly. Loans should be paid within 50 weeks, with the borrowers' harvests serving as collateral.

When an SLG is dissolved, the members' total deposits as well as the "emergency fund" are appropriated by CECAP and the cooperative.

To ensure profit, an entire SLG is deemed responsible for loans to individual members. When a member is three months past due with his payments, his debt is credited to his SLG's emergency trust fund. If the debt exceeds the latter, it is credited to the group's total deposits, causing conflict among members.

Aside from SLGs, production groups were also formed. Members of this group were conditioned to plant cash crops dependent on fertilizers and pesticides introduced by CECAP.

RAMPANT CORRUPTION

Among the principal sources of corruption in CECAP is the

hefty commissions its administrators receive from the sale of commercial fertilizers and pesticides in the communities along with the entry of new crop varieties. Another is the sizeable profit obtained from supplying goods to cooperatives they control through the mother cooperatives. CECAP introduces livestock raising projects which require its technical assistance. Although such assistance is subsidized, those who avail of it are nonetheless obliged to pay a fee because administrators pocket the funds allocated for this purpose.

CECAP's infrastructure projects like foot bridges and farm-to-market roads, loading platforms, trading stations and roadside baggage decks are likewise corruption-ridden. Despite the big budgets allocated for such projects, people employed in the hauling of materials to mountainous areas and in the construction projects receive no pay. In their financial reports, however, CECAP administrators include alleged wage payments to workers.

Cases where CECAP administrators pilfer construction materials and take kickbacks from their purchase are rampant. For instance, cement prices are marked up by P30 per bag in what hardware store owners call "CECAP pricing", a scheme that rakes in thrice the amount compared to the P10-per-bag markup dubbed "DPWH pricing". A number of bureaucrats benefit from raking in funds earmarked for CECAP projects through connivance and manipulation.

FIGHT CECAP AND SIMILAR PROGRAMS!

Deception, more intensified semifeudal exploitation, the destruction of the balanced and sustainable agriculture practiced by ►

Maj. Noel Buan

NPA frees prisoner of war

The New People's Army (NPA) effected the safe and orderly release of prisoner of war Army Maj. Noel Buan on April 6 in Mansalay, Oriental Mindoro.

Buan was arrested by the NPA on July 7, 1999 in Lucena, Quezon when he was the deputy intelligence chief or AC2 of the Southern Luzon Command. In October 1999, he was captured by the Melito Glor Command (MGC) for his active participation in counterrevolutionary campaigns and operations of the AFP and related crimes.

He was ordered released on humanitarian grounds in the face of requests from the Humanitarian and Peace Mission, Buan's relatives as well as other groups and personalities. This was a good exercise of political authority by the people's democratic government. It was also a step that manifested the revolutionary movement's sincerity in entering the peace talks.

On April 6, the MGC transferred custody over Buan to the International Committee of the Red Cross and representatives of the Humanitarian and Peace Mission, the Public Interest Law Center and the GRP Negotiating Panel. With arms linked, they, along with Party spokesperson Gregorio "Ka Roger"



Rosal and Comrade Tirso "Ka Bart" Alcantara went towards the place where the family and relatives of the prisoner of war awaited.

Afterwards, Sen. Loren Legarda, a member of the peace mission, expressed happiness over Buan's successful release. Buan and his family in turn thanked all those who had a hand in releasing him.

The National Democratic Front of the Philippines through Comrade Luis Jalandoni and Jose Ma. Sison hailed the Party, NPA and all other groups involved in the release. They said that Buan's release is proof of the revolutionary movement's status of belligerency. For 22 months it had proven its capability to hold prisoners of war in its custody and accord them humane treatment and respect for their rights. They also expressed hope that this would improve conditions for the resumption of peace talks between the GRP and NDFP.

The MGC-NPA set up checkpoints to ensure the orderly transfer of Buan to his family.

The MGC-NPA also issued passes to the media and other persons who participated in the release. **AB**

the Cordillera people and corruption perpetrated by administrators are mainly what Cordillera farmers can expect from CECAP.

To effectively fight the deceit and trickery being perpetrated by CECAP and such other programs as the Cordillera Highland Agricultural Resource Management (CHARM) and the Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (CIDSS), it is imperative for the Cordillera people to strengthen their

unity and raise the level of their militancy.

The people of concerned areas in the Cordillera must continue and broaden their current struggle against these programs. They must expose the connivance between the proponents of these programs and the big comprador bourgeoisie and the reactionary government. The corruption in CECAP's operations and the health and environmental hazards caused by the fertilizers

and pesticides introduced by these programs should likewise be exposed.

Anti-people programs like CECAP will keep on cropping up as long as the rotten ruling system exists. Only through the institution of fundamental economic and political change through the democratic people's revolution can the chains that fetter the people to oppression and exploitation be broken. **AB**

SOMO and SOPO violations

As a condition for the orderly release of prisoner of war Maj. Noel Buan, the GRP declared a suspension of offensive military operations (SOMO) and suspension of offensive police operations (SOPO). These were also undertaken to ensure the safe withdrawal of the NPA custodial force.

According to a statement by Ka Bart on March 26, however, the AFP and PNP nonetheless blatantly violated their own SOMO and SOPO. Said Ka Bart: "The military and police had still not learned their lesson from the failed rescue operation in Gen. Nakar, Quezon that killed prisoner of war P/CInsp. Abelardo Martin."

On March 19 and 23, the PNP Special Action Force launched an operation and set up roving checkpoints in Roxas and Victoria towns in Oriental Mindoro. Military operations continued till the end of March in Roxas, Mansalay and Bulalacao.

In Batulao, Batangas, the Philippine Marines conducted combat and intelligence operations on March 19. The military and PNP also launched a joint operation in Lobo town on March 6. Military operations continue in Nasugbu.

Ka Bart also said that the 76th IB was active in Macalelon town and other areas of South Quezon from March 17-19. Meanwhile, the military has not ceased its operations in the towns of Lopez, Sariaya, Mauban and Unisan.

Because of the AFP and PNP's flagrant violations of their own declared SOMO and SOPO especially in March, the CPP/NPA/NDFP demanded that the Macapagal-Arroyo regime ensure that

- a. All PNP-SAF forces in Bulalacao, Oriental Mindoro; in San Mariano, Roxas; and in San Antonio and Cagulong in Mansalay be confined to their barracks;
- b. All RSAF checkpoints from Puerto Galera to Bulalacao be dismantled;
- c. All elements of the AFP Military Intelligence Tactical Units (MITU) in Oriental Mindoro be confined to Calapan or Manila. **AB**



NEWS OF STRUGGLE

NPA ATTACKS CELL SITE IN DANAOS

Red fighters attacked a cell site of Smart Telecommunications in Barangay Looc, Danao City on April 21. In a letter, Hans Agricola, information official of the National Democratic Front said that a four-man team of the Jovito Plaza Brigade bombed the guardhouse of the cell site to punish Smart for its refusal to pay revolutionary taxes.

NPA RAIDS STA. TERESITA FARM

NPA Red fighters launched a successful raid on Sta. Teresita Farm in Tagkawayan, Quezon on April 20. A squad-size NPA team confiscated three high-caliber firearms and two ICOM radios during the raid.

CAFGU PUNISHED

The NPA punished Ezequiel Pimentel, 44, in Maddela, Quirino on April 16. He was a notorious member of the Citizens Armed Forces Geographical Unit and was guilty of many cases of abuse against the people.

REVOLUTIONARY JUSTICE METED OUT ON ABUSIVE PNP-CPD OFFICIAL

The Melito Glor Command (MGC) of the NPA-Southern Tagalog meted the death penalty on Chief Insp. Marcelo Velasco of the Central Police District of Quezon City on April 11. Velasco was punished in Tandang Sora, Quezon City, at around 7:00 pm.

In a statement, Tirso "Ka Bart" Alcantara, MGC spokesperson, said that the NPA punished Velasco for his long list of crimes and abuses against the people. He likewise said that the punishment was in response to complaints from many families in Tandang Sora victimized by Velasco. Among these crimes were the rape and mauling of a number of women. Velasco likewise hurled death threats against people around him, challenged his neighbors to fights and indiscriminately fired his gun. Velasco was also a landgrabber and a protector of drug syndicates.

In related news, the NPA also punished Surigao City police chief Senior Supt. Alberto Olario on April 23 in Jabonga, Agusan del Norte.

THREE SOLDIERS WOUNDED IN NPA AMBUSH

Three soldiers were wounded in an ambush launched by the NPA in Cateel, Davao Oriental. The soldiers were on combat patrol when ambushed by the Red fighters in Barrio Aliwagwag on April 1.

MANERO TO BE PUNISHED BY THE NPA

The NPA Magtanggol Roque Command declared in the first week of April that it would arrest, try and punish

Norberto Manero, notorious anti-communist cultist who murdered Fr. Tulio Favali in 1985.

In a statement, the NPA command said that it would not transfer custody of Manero to the police and military in case he is arrested. It added that it would arrest Manero and let the masses decide on his punishment.

The statement was released after Manero was allowed to escape from prison on March 22.

BARANGAY CAPTAIN PUNISHED

The NPA meted revolutionary justice on Rodrigo Jandayan, village chief of Barangay Tanod, Anda, Bohol on March 25.

According to Silvino Clamucha, National Democratic Front-Central Visayas spokesperson, Jandayan was punished with death because of his crimes against the revolutionary movement. Comrade Clamucha said that Jandayan served as a military spy. He also abused farmers and supporters of the revolutionary movement.

NOTORIOUS HACIENDERO IN LEYTE PUNISHED

Red fighters scorched on March 24 a truck owned by Manuel Torres, a notorious haciendero in Ormoc, Leyte. This was after Torres stubbornly refused to pay revolutionary taxes.

The truck burned by the Reynaldo Jorial Command cost P350,000. It was put to the torch in a sugar farm owned by Torres in Sitio Sumangga, Barangay Campo Lopez. The guerrillas did not hurt the truck driver. Instead, he was told to get off the truck before the vehicle was set on fire.

BHB OWNS PUNISHMENT OF IMEE MARCOS FRIEND

The NPA owned the October 19, 2000 ambush and punishment of Celsar Bendigo and his two goons in Barangay Wagie, Leyte. Bendigo was a businessman and a close friend of Rep. Imee Marcos.

In a statement, Ka Dadong Malaya, spokesperson of the BHB-Northern Leyte Mt. Andrewin Command, said that Bendigo and his companions were punished because of their crimes against the peasants, including the eviction of more than 40 families from a 90-hectare piece of land, the execution of farmers and strafing of peasant communities.

The BHB seized from Bendigo's vehicle a .45, a shotgun, 1,000 rounds of Armalite bullets and military equipment.

The BHB apologized for not immediately claiming responsibility and explaining the basis for the punitive action, causing innocent people to be blamed. Ka Dadong called on the police to stop persecuting suspected civilians. He also called on the victims of the Bendigos' abuses to

file charges against the family.

NDFP REFUSES GRP CALL FOR "MUTUAL CEASEFIRE"

"The GRP-NDFP peace negotiations must first address the roots of civil war before ending armed conflict," said Comrade Jose Maria Sison, NDFP chief political consultant in a statement regarding the refusal of the revolutionary movement to an "indefinite nationwide mutual ceasefire" being demanded by the Macapagal-Arroyo regime.

According to Comrade Joma, any indefinite nationwide mutual ceasefire before there is any comprehensive agreement on social, economic and political reforms may be equated with the pacification or capitulation of the revolutionary movement.

"There is a very big difference between pacification and the struggle for a just and lasting peace by addressing the roots of civil war through peace negotiations," added Ka Joma. According to him, the GRP can succeed in getting the NDFP to consent to an indefinite nationwide mutual ceasefire if the GRP recognizes the political authority and territory of the people's democratic government. But he said that he believes the GRP would not allow this.

In conclusion, Ka Joma stated that for now, it would suffice to have mutual ceasefires whose objectives, scope, timeframe and place are specified, such as during the safe and orderly release of prisoners of war, the carrying of casualties across battlefields, the launching of health and anti-epidemic campaigns by health workers from either side, and the celebration Christmas and the New Year.

NDFP PEACE PANELISTS VISIT THE PHILIPPINES

Comrades Luis Jalandoni, chief of the National Democratic Front of the Philippines peace panel, Antonio Zumel, NDFP panel senior adviser, and Coni Ledesma and Ruth de Leon, members of the NDF peace panel, arrived on April 8 from The Hague, The Netherlands to consult with comrades from various areas nationwide. The visit was part of the preparations for the scheduled peace talks between the Government of the Republic of the Philippines and the NDFP on April 27.

Included in the peace panel's itinerary was a visit to political prisoners on April 19 and attendance in a peace conference held on April 18. The conference theme was "Solidarity for a Just and Lasting Peace". It was sponsored by the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines and the National Council of Churches in the Philippines.

Aside from the members of the NDFP peace panel, the GRP peace panel and other personages and groups from within and outside the country attended the conference.

During the conference, the NDFP laid out its demands to the Macapagal-Arroyo regime, including the immediate

release of all political prisoners and the dismantling of the labor contractualization policy. The NDFP also called for an increase in workers' wages.

"PEOPLE'S CALVARY" LAUNCHED IN LAGUNA

Around 250 farmers, fisherfolk, urban poor, church workers and other militant groups in Bay, Laguna launched the "Kalbaryo ng Mamamayan sa Panahon ni Gloria" (People's Calvary during Gloria's regime) caravan that began on April 12. The caravan headed for Manila from Calamba and returned to Sta. Cruz, Laguna.

During the caravan, various sectors from Southern Tagalog challenged both Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo and Jaime Cardinal Sin to side with peasants fighting for their right to land, river and sea resources, against the big comprador bourgeoisie and hacenderos who continue to amass wealth at the expense of impoverished peasants.

According to the Katipunan ng mga Samahang Magbubukid ng Timog Katagalugan (Kasama-TK), families such as the Ayalas, Zobels, Roxases, Yulos, Locsins,

Cojuangcos, Puyats and Sys are enriching themselves while farmers remain landless. Prices of their products are kept very low in the face of inflation, and farmers are pushed to the wall by anti-peasant policies such as globalization, the Fisheries Code, the Mining Act and the Agricultural Fisheries Modernization Act.

MILITANT ANTI-ESTRADA CARAVAN LAUNCHED

A caravan was militantly launched on April 3 by the broad united front including Bayan Muna, Council for Philippine Affairs (Copa) and other groups and organizations. The caravan aimed to protest the delay in the prosecution of ousted president Joseph Estrada.

Travelling from Manila to Baguio, the 400-strong caravan called for the immediate prosecution of Estrada. That same day, two petitions by Estrada were junked by the Supreme Court. The first petition sought the recall of the court decision that installed Macapagal-Arroyo as president. The second petition sought immunity for Estrada from any criminal suit.

NPA punishes criminal candidates

In separate incidents, the New People's Army punished six mayors and mayoralty candidates who committed crimes against the people and the revolutionary movement. The NPA-Ilocos Sur Alfredo Cesar Command (ACC) declared on April 20, 2001, that Teodoro Hernaez, mayor of Sta. Lucia, along with three of his police bodyguards, were punished by an NPA sparrow unit for being chronically antipeople and counterrevolutionary. The NPA confiscated from them an M14, a 9 mm and a .45.

In a correspondence report to **AB**, the ACC said that Hernaez's punishment on the evening of April 18 accorded justice to the people of Sta. Lucia who had long been suffering under his rule. Said the ACC, Hernaez was a despotic landlord and warlord. He actively connived with local officials and the AFP and PNP to endanger, liquidate or push for the surrender of the NPA and the revolutionary people of Sta. Lucia. He suppressed the organizing and mobilization of peasants fighting for their rights.

The ACC said that the Hernaez family viciously exploited their tenants.

"They extorted up to 75% of the tenants' harvest as land rent. They extort huge profits through usurious loans and exact tribute from tenants in the form of vegetables, fruits and unpaid labor," the ACC explained. Aside from this, the Hernaez family underpriced the farmers' products and grabbed their lands.

The ACC added that Hernaez used his position as mayor to enrich himself, his family and his friends and to consolidate his political power. He took the lead in criminal activities and was a major protector of prostitution rings, drug dealers, jueteng operators and others.

In conclusion, the ACC said that although Hernaez may have been old, the people could no longer tolerate another day under his despicable and avaricious rule.

In a related development, the NPA punished Oscar Turralba, mayoralty candidate in La Paz, Agusan del Sur on April 21 at 11:45 a.m. Turralba was punished for his antipeople and counterrevolutionary activities.

Turralba was the second mayoralty candidate who was meted revolutionary justice by the NPA in Agusan. On April 17, at around 11:30 in the evening, the NPA

punished Lope Asis, mayor of Bayugan, Agusan del Sur.

In a statement aired over the radio, the NPA-Northern Mindanao Nicolas Monteverde Command stated that Asis was punished for being a notorious druglord and gun smuggler.

In Bicol, revolutionary justice was meted out on three candidates for local government posts.

On April 20, at around 9:30 p.m., the Romulo Jallores Command of the NPA punished Dr. Florencio Muñoz, Lakas-NUCD mayoralty candidate in Camalig, Albay. Muñoz, who was mayor of Camalig for 25 years before his wife replaced him, was running for office once again. He was punished by the NPA because he rabidly supported an anti-people cement plant project in Palanog, Albay despite the people's vehement opposition.

On April 19, a candidate for board member in Camarines Norte was punished with death because of his counterrevolutionary activities. Felix Frayna, another notorious anti-people candidate for mayor in Sta. Magdalena, Sorsogon, was punished by the NPA on April 4. **AB**